

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 7 is amended. No new matter is added by this amendment. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 2, rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 7 is amended to obviate the rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 2, rejects claims 1-5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,375,508 to Pickles et al. (hereinafter "Pickles"). The Office Action, in paragraph 4, rejects claims 6 and 9 as being unpatentable over Pickles. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Pickles discloses an electrical connector assembly including a receptacle connector and a plug connector (Abstract). The Office Action asserts that Pickles teaches many of the features recited in the subject matter of the pending claims. However, Pickles does not teach (1) the first and second interconnect combs which are arranged facing each other, (2) the teeth of each of the first and second combs are alternatively rigid and elastic, and (3) the elastic teeth and the rigid teeth of the first comb are situated respectively facing the rigid teeth and the elastic teeth of the second comb, as are positively recited in at least independent claim 1.

First, Pickles teaches that the first and second interconnect combs are not arranged facing each other. Fig. 5, of Pickles, illustrates that the two interconnect combs are joined by a central stem (52), and that the press-fit sections (58) extend downwardly from the central stem, and the stiffening tabs (54) and resilient arms (56) extend upwards from the central stem. Therefore, Pickles cannot reasonably be considered to teach that the first (58) and second (54 and 56) interconnect combs are arranged facing each other, as Pickles teaches that

the interconnect combs are arranged in the same plane and extend outwards, in opposite directions, and, therefore, are not disposed in such a fashion that they are facing each other.

Second, Pickles does not teach that the teeth of each of the first and second combs are alternatively rigid and elastic. Rather, Pickles teaches, as illustrated in Fig. 5, that the resilient arms (56) are disposed on one 'interconnect comb', and are adjacent to the stiffening tabs (54), and that the second "interconnect comb" contains only press-fit sections, and no resilient, or elastic, sections. Therefore, Pickles cannot reasonably be considered to teach each of the first and second combs are alternatively rigid and elastic.

Finally, Pickles does not teach that the elastic teeth and the rigid teeth of the first comb are situated respectively facing the rigid teeth and the elastic teeth of the second comb. Rather, as discussed above, Pickles teaches that only one comb has resilient, or elastic, teeth, and thus, the elastic and rigid teeth of one comb, cannot face the rigid and elastic teeth of the other comb, as one comb does not contain elastic teeth. Therefore, Pickles cannot reasonably be considered to teach that the rigid and elastic teeth of each comb alternatively face the elastic and rigid teeth of the second comb, respectively.

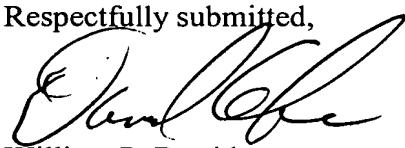
For at least the above reasons, Pickles cannot reasonably be considered to teach, or even to have suggested, the combination of all of the features positively recited in at least independent claim 1. Further, claims 2-9 are also neither taught, nor would they have been suggested, by the applied prior art references for at least the respective dependence of these claims on allowable independent claim 1, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the subject matter of claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by, or under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over, Pickles are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-9 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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